



Christiana B. Talbot

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L I F E

and

Perambulation

of a

House.

In Two Volumes

VOL. I.



L O N D O N.

Printed & sold by John Marshall, N.^o 4

Aldermarsh Church Yard in Bow Lane.

& N.^o 17 Queen Street, Cheapside.

(Price Six Pence in Gilt Paper)



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TO the READER.

BEFORE you begin the following history, which is made believe to be related by a MOUSE, I must beg, you will be careful to remember, that the Author's design in writing it, was no less to instruct and improve, than it was to amuse and divert you. It is therefore, earnestly hoped, that as you read it, you will observe all the good advice therein delivered, and endeavour to profit from it, whilst at the same time, you resolve to shun all actions which render those who practise them not only despicable, but really wicked. Sincerely wishing that the Mouse may prove neither wholly unentertaining nor un instructive to you, I subscribe myself

A very sincere Well-wisher,

To all my little Readers

VOL. I

A

M. P.



I N T R O D U C T I O N.

DURING a remarkable severe winter, when a prodigious fall of snow confined every body to their habitations, who were happy enough to have one to shelter them from the inclemency of the season, and were not obliged, by business, to expose themselves to its rigour, I was on a visit to *Meadow-Hall*; where had assembled likewise a large party of young folk, who all seemed, by their harmony and good-humour, to strive who should the most contribute to render pleasant that confinement which we were all equally obliged to share. Nor were those further advanced in life, less anxious to contribute to the general satisfaction and entertainment.

After the more serious employment of reading each morning was concluded, we danced, we sung, we played at blindman's buff, battledore and shuttlecock, and many other

games equally diverting and innocent, and when tired of them, drew our seats round the fire, whilst each one in turn, told some merry story to divert the company.

At last, after having related all that we could recollect worth reciting, and being rather at a loss what to say next, a sprightly girl in company proposed, that every one should relate the history of their own lives; And it must be strange indeed, added she, if that will not help us out of this difficulty, and furnish conversation for some days longer, and by that time, perhaps, the frost will break, the snow will melt, and set us all at liberty. But let it break when it will, I make a *law*, that no one shall go from *Meadow-hall* till they have told their own history; so take notice ladies and gentlemen, take notice every body what you have to trust to. And because, continued she, I will not be unreasonable, and require more from you than you can perform, I will give all you, who

who may perhaps have forgotten what passed so many years ago, at the beginning of your lives, two days to recollect and digest your story ; by which time, if you do not produce something pretty and entertaining, we will never again admit you to dance or play among us. All this she spoke with so good-humoured a smile, that every one was delighted with her, and promised to do their best to acquit themselves to her satisfaction ; whilst some (the *length* of whose lives had not rendered them *forgetful* of the transactions which had passed) instantly began their *memoirs*, as they called them : and really some related their narratives with such spirit and ingenuity, that it quite distressed us as older ones, lest we should disgrace ourselves, when it should fall to our turn to hold forth. However, we were all determined to produce *something*, as our fair directress ordered. Accordingly the next morning I took up my pen to endeavour to draw up some kind of a

history, which might satisfy my companions in confinement.—I *took up my pen* it is true, and laid the paper before me, but not one word toward my appointed task could I proceed. The various occurrences of my life were such as far from affording entertainment, would, I was certain, rather afflict; or, perhaps, not *interesting* enough for that, only *stupify*, and render them more weary of the continuation of the frost than they were before I began my narration. Thus circumstanced, therefore, although by myself, I broke silence by exclaiming, What a task has this sweet girl imposed upon me! One which I shall never be able to execute to my *own satisfaction*, or *her amusement*! The adventures of my life (though deeply interesting to myself) will be insipid and unenterprising to others, especially to my young hearers: I cannot therefore attempt it:—Then write mine, which may be more diverting, said a little squeaking voice, which
founded

founded as if close to me. I started with surprise ! not knowing any one to be near me ! and looking round, could discover no object from whom it could possibly proceed, when casting my eyes upon the ground, in a little hole under the skirting-board, close by the fire, I discovered the head of a Mouse peeping out. I arose with a design to stop the hole with a cork, which happened to lay on the table by me, and I was surprised to find that it did not run away, but suffered me to advance quite close, and then only retreated a little into the hole, saying in the same voice as before, Will you write my history ? You may be sure that I was much surprised to be so addressed by such an animal ; but ashamed of discovering any appearance of astonishment, lest the Mouse should suppose it had frightened me, I answered with the utmost composure, that I would write it willingly if it would dictate to me. O ! that I will do, replied the Mouse, if you will not hurt me, Not for
the

the world, returned I ; come, therefore and sit upon my table, that I may hear more distinctly what you have to relate. It instantly accepted my invitation, and with all the nimbleness of its species, ran up the side of my chair, and jumped upon my table ; when getting into a box of wafers, it began as follows :

But before I proceed to relate my new little companion's history, I must beg leave to assure my readers, that, in *earnest*, I never heard a Mouse speak in all my life, and only wrote the following narrative as being far more entertaining, and not less instructive than my own life would have been ; and as it met with the high approbation of those for whom it was written, I have sent it to Mr. *Marshall*, for him to publish it if he pleases, for the equal amusement of his little customers.



THE
L I F E, &c.

O F A

M O U S E.

LIKE all other new born animals, whether of the human or any other species. I cannot pretend to remember, what passed during my infant days. The first circumstance I can recollect was my mother's addressing me and my three brothers, who all lay in the same nest, in the following words; I have my children, with the greatest difficulty and utmost hazard of my life, provided for you all to the present moment.—But the period is arrived, when I can no longer pursue that method: snares and traps are every where set for me, nor shall I, without infinite danger, be able to procure sustenance to support my own existence, much less can I find sufficient for you all; and indeed; with pleasure, I behold it as no longer necessary,
since

since you are of age now to provide and shift for yourselves. And I doubt not, but your agility will enable you to procure a very comfortable livelihood; only let me give you this one caution, never (whatever the temptation may be) appear often in the same place; if you do, however you may flatter yourselves to the contrary, you will certainly at last be destroyed. So saying, she stroked us all with her fore paw as a token of her affection, and then hurried away, to conceal from us the emotions of her sorrow at thus sending us into the wide world.

She was no sooner gone, than the thought of being our own directors so charmed our little hearts, that we presently forgot our grief at parting from our kind parent, and impatient to use our liberty, we all set forward in search of some food, or rather some *adventure*; as our mother had left us victuals more than sufficient to supply the wants of that day. With a great deal of difficulty, we clambered up a high wall on the inside of a wainscot, till we reached the story above that we were born in, where we found it much easier to run round within the skirting-board, than to ascend any higher.

While we were there, our noses were delightfully regaled with the *scent* of the most delicate

PERAMBULATION of a MOUSE. 15

delicate food that we had ever smelt ; we were anxious to procure a taste of it likewise, and after running round and round the room a great many times, we at last discovered a little crack, through which we made our entrance. My brother *Longtail* led the way ; I followed ; *Sofidown* came next ; but *Bright-eyes* would not be prevailed upon to venture. The apartment which we entered was spacious and elegant, at least, differed so greatly from any thing we had seen, that we imagined it the finest place upon earth. It was covered all over with a carpet of various



colours

colours that not only concealed some bird-seeds which we came to devour, but also for some time prevented our being discovered; as we were of much the same hue with many of the flowers on the carpet. At last a little girl who was at work in the room by the side of her mamma, shrieked out as if violently hurt. Her mamma begged to know the cause of her sudden alarm. Upon which she called out, a Mouse! a Mouse! I saw one under the chair! And if you did, my dear, replied her mother, is that any reason for your behaving so ridiculously? If there were twenty mice, what harm *could* they possibly do? *you* may easily hurt and destroy *them*; but, poor little things! *they* cannot if they would hurt *you*. What could not they *bite* me? inquired the child. They may indeed be *able* to do that: but you may be *very* sure that they have no such inclination, rejoined the mother. A Mouse is one of the most timorous things in the world; every noise alarms it: and though it chiefly lives by plunder, it appears as if punished by its fears for the mischiefs which he commits among our property. It is therefore, highly ridiculous to pretend to be alarmed at the sight of a creature that would run from the sound of your voice, and wishes never to come near you,

left,

left, as you are far more *able*, you should also be disposed to hurt it. But I am sure, Madam, replied the little girl, whose name I afterwards heard was *Nancy*, they do not *always* run away; for one day as Miss *Betsy Kite* was looking among some things, which she had in her box, a Mouse jumped out and ran up her frock sleeve; she felt it quite upon her arm. And what became of it then? inquired the mother. It jumped down again, replied *Nancy*, and got into a little hole in the window seat; and *Betsy* did not see it again. Well then my dear, resumed the lady what *harm* did it do her? Is not that a convincing proof of what I say, that you have no cause to be *afraid* of them, and that it is very silly to be so? It is certainly foolish to be afraid of *any* thing, unless it threatens us with immediate danger, but to pretend to be so at a *Mouse* and such like inoffensive things, is a degree of weakness that I can by no means suffer any of my children to indulge. May I then, Madam, inquired the child, be afraid of cows and horses; and such great beasts as those? Certainly not answered her mother, unless they are likely to hurt you. If a cow or an horse runs after you, I would have you fear them as much as to get out of the way; but if they are

18 PERAMBULATION of a Mouse.

quietly walking or grazing in a field, then to fly from them, as if you thought they would eat *you* instead of the grass, is most absurd, and discovers great want of sense. I once knew a young lady who, I believe, thought it looked *pretty* to be terrified at every thing, and scream if a dog, or even a *Mouse* looked at her : but most severely was she punished for her folly, by several very disagreeable accidents she by those means brought upon herself.

One day when she was drinking tea in a large company, on the door being opened, a small *Italian* grey-hound walked into the



drawing

drawing room. She happened to be seated near the mistress of the dog, who was making tea : the dog, therefore, walked toward her, in order to be by his favourite : but upon his advancing near her, she suddenly jumped up, without considering what she was about, overturned the water-urn, the hot iron of which rolling out, set fire to her cloaths. which instantly blazed up, being only muslin, and burnt her arms, face, and neck, most dreadfully : she was so much hurt as to be obliged to be put immediately to bed ; nor did she recover enough to go abroad for many months. Now though every one was sorry for her sufferings, who could possibly help blaming her for her ridiculous behaviour ? as it was entirely owing to her own folly, that she was so hurt. When she was talked to upon the subject, she pleaded for her excuse, that she was so frightened, she did not *know* what she did, nor whether she was going ; but as she *thought* that the dog was coming to her she could not *help* jumping up, to get out of his way. Now what ridiculous arguing was this ! Why *could* not she *help* it ? And if the dog had really been going to her, what harm would it have done ? Could she suppose that the lady whose house she was at, would

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have suffered a beast to walk about the house loose, and go into company, if he was apt to *bite* and *hurt* people? Or why should she think he would more injure *her*, than those he had before passed by? But the real case was, she did not think at all; if she had given herself time for that, she could not have acted so ridiculously. Another time



when she was walking from the same want of reflection, she very nearly drowned herself. She was passing over a bridge, the outside rails of which were in some places broken down:

down: while she was there, some cows, which a man was driving, met her: immediately, without minding whether she went she shrieked out, and at the same time jumped on one side just where the rail happened to be broken, and down she fell into the river; nor was it without the greatest difficulty that she was taken out time enough to save her life. However she caught a violent cold and fever, and was again, by her own foolish fears, confined to her bed for some weeks. Another accident she once met with, which though not quite so bad as the two former, yet might have been attended with fatal consequences. She was sitting in a window, when a wasp happened to fly toward her; she hastily drew back her head, and broke the pane of glass behind her, some of which stuck in her neck. It bled prodigiously; but a surgeon happily being present, made some application to it, which prevented its being followed with any other ill effects, than only a few days weakness, occasioned by the loss of blood. Many other misfortunes of the like kind she frequently experienced, but these which I have now related, may serve to convince you how extremely absurd it is for people to give way to, and indulge themselves in such groundless apprehensions; and they

being afraid, when there is no danger, subject themselves to real misfortunes, and most fatal accidents. And if being afraid of *cows*, *dogs*, and *wasps*, all of which if they please, *can* certainly hurt us) is so ridiculous, what must be the folly of those people who are terrified at a little silly *Mouse*, which never was known to hurt any body.

Here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of some gentlemen and ladies; and we having enjoyed a very fine repast under one of the chairs during the time that the mother and daughter had held the above discourse, on the chairs being removed for some of the visitors to sit upon, we thought it best to retire: highly pleased with our meal, and not less with the kind good will which the lady had we thought expressed towards us. We related to our brother *Brighteyes* all that had passed, and assured him he had no reason to apprehend any danger from venturing himself with us. Accordingly he promised, if such was the case, that the next time we went and found it safe, if we would return back and call him, he would certainly accompany us. In the mean time, do pray *Nimble*, said he, addressing himself to me, come with me to some other place, for I long to taste some more delicate food than our mother

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ther has provided for us, beside, as perhaps it may be a long while before we shall be strong enough to bring any thing away with us, we had better leave that, in case we should ever be prevented from going abroad to seek for fresh supplies. Very true replied I, what you say is quite just and wise, therefore I will with all my heart attend you now, and see what we can find. So saying, we began to climb; but not without much difficulty, for very frequently the bits of mortar which we stepped upon gave way beneath our feet, and tumbled us down together with it lower than when we first set off. However, as we were very light, we were not much hurt by our falls; only indeed, poor *Brighteyes*, by endeavouring to save himself, caught by his nails on a rafter, and tore off one of them from off his right fore-foot, which was very sore, and inconvenient. At length we surmounted all difficulties, and, invited by a strong scent of plum-cake, entered a closet, where we found a fine large one, quite whole and entire. We immediately set about making our way into it, which we easily effected, as it was most deliciously nice, and not at all hard to our teeth.

Brighteyes, who had not before partaken of the bird-feed, was overjoyed at the sight. He almost

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almost forgot the pain of his foot, and soon buried himself withinside the cake; whilst I, who had pretty well satisfied my hunger before, only ate a few of the crumbs, and then went to take a survey of the adjoining apartment. I crept softly under the door of the closet into a room, as large as that which I had before been in, though not so elegantly furnished; for instead of being covered with a carpet, there was only a small one round a bed; and near the fire was a cradle, with a cleanly looking woman sitting by it, rocking it with her foot, whilst at the same time we



was combing the head of a little boy about four years old. In the middle of the room stood a table covered with a great deal of litter; and in one corner was the little girl whom I had before seen with her mamma, crying and sobbing as if her heart would break. As I made not the least noise at my entrance, no one observed me for some time; so creeping under one of the beds, I heard the following discourse.

It does not signify, Miss, said the woman, who I found was the children's nurse, I never will put up with such behaviour: you know that I always do every thing for you when you speak *prettily*; but to be *ordered* to dress you in such a manner, is what I never will submit to; and you shall go *undressed* all day before I will dress you, unless you will ask me as you *ought* to do. *Nancy* made no reply: but only continued crying. Aye! you may cry and sob as much as you please, said the nurse; I do not care for that: I shall not dress you for *crying* and *roaring*, but for being *good* and speaking with civility. Just as she said these words, the door opened, and in came the lady whom I before saw, and whose name I afterwards found was *Arlefs*. As soon as she entered the nurse addressed her, saying, Pray, Madam, is it by your desire that

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that Miss *Nancy* behaves so rudely, and bid me dress her directly, and change the buckle in her shoes, or else she will slap my face: indeed she did give me a slap upon my hand so I told her, that I would not dress her at all; for really, Madam, I thought you would not wish me to do it, whilst she behaved so, and I took the liberty of putting her to stand in the corner. I do not think, replied Mrs. *Artless*, that she deserves to stand in the room at all, or in the *house* either, if she behaves in that manner: if she does not speak civilly when she wants to be assisted, let her go without help, and see what will become of her then. I am quite ashamed of you, *Nancy*! I could not have thought you would behave so; but since you have, I promise that you shall not be dressed to-day, or have any assistance given you, unless you speak in a very different manner.

Whilst Mrs. *Artless* was talking, Nurse went out of the room, Mrs. *Artless* then took her seat by the cradle, and looking into it found the child awake, and I saw her take out a fine little girl about five months old: she then continued her discourse, saying look here *Nancy*, look at this little baby, see how unable it is to help itself, were we to neglect attending to it, what do you think would

would become of it? Suppose I were now to put your sister upon the floor, and there leave her, tell me what do you think she could do, or what would become of her?

Nancy sobbed out, that she would die. And pray, my dear, continued Mrs. *Artless*, if we were to leave *you* to yourself, what would become of *you*? It is true you talk, and run about better than *Polly*, but not a bit better could you provide for, or take care of yourself. Could you buy, or dress your own victuals? could you light your own fire? could you clean your own house, or open and shut the doors and windows? Could you make your own clothes, or even put them on without some assistance, when made? And who do you think will do any thing for you, if you are not good, and do not speak civilly? Not *I*, I promise you, neither shall nurse, nor any of the servants; for though I pay them wages to help to do my business for me, I never want them to do any thing unless they are desired in a pretty manner. Should you like, if when I want you to pick up my scissars, or do any little job, I were to say, *pick up my scissars this moment, or I will slap your face?* Should not you think that it sounded very cross, and disagreeable?

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Yes, Madam replied *Nancy*. Then why rejoined *Mrs. Artless*, should you speak cross to any body, particularly to *servants* and *poor* people? for to behave so to them, is not only *cross*, but *insolent* and *proud*: it is as if you thought that because they are rather poorer, they are not so good as yourself whereas I assure you, *poverty* makes no difference in the merit of people; for those only are deserving of respect who are truly good and a *beggar* who is *virtuous*, is far better than a *prince* who is *wicked*. I was prevented from hearing any more of this very just dis-



cour

course, by the little boy's opening the door and letting in a cat, which though it was the first that I had ever seen in my life, I was certain was the same destructive animal to our race, which I had frequently heard my mother describe. I therefore made all possible haste back to the closet, and warning *Brighteyes*, of our danger, we instantly returned by the same way which we came, to our two brothers, whom we found waiting for us, and wondering at our long absence. We related to them the dainty cheer which we had met with, and agreed to conduct them thither in the evening. Accordingly, as soon as it grew towards dusk, we climbed up the wall, and all four together attacked the plum-cake, which no one had touched since we left it; but scarcely had we all seated ourselves round it, than on a sudden the closet door opened, and a woman entered. Away we all scampered as fast as possible, but poor *Brighteyes*, who could not move quite so fast on account of his sore toe, and who likewise having advanced farther into the cake, was discovered before he could reach the crack by which we entered. The woman, who had a knife in her hand, struck at him with it, at the same time exclaiming, Bless me nuff, here is a mouse in the closet! Happily she missed her aim, and

he only received a small wound on the tip of his tail. This interruption sadly alarmed us, and it was above an hour before we could have courage to venture back, when finding every thing quiet, except Mrs. nurse's singing to her child we again crept out, and once more surrounded the cake. We continued without any further alarm till we were perfectly satisfied, and then retired to a little distance behind the wainscot, determined there to sleep, and to breakfast on the cake the next day.

Early in the morning I waked, and calling my brothers, we all marched forward, and soon arrived at the delightful cake, where we highly enjoyed ourselves without the least disturbance, till our appetites were fully satisfied. We then retired, and took a little run round some other parts of the house, but met with nothing worth relating. At noon we again made our way into the closet, intending to dine on the dish on which we breakfasted; but to our no small mortification, the delicious dainty was removed. This you may be sure was a sad disappointment; yet as we were not extremely hungry, we had time to look about for more. We were not long in finding it, for upon the same shelf from which the cake was removed, there was a round

a round tin box, the lid of which was not quite close shut down, into this we all crept, and were highly regaled with some nice lumps of sugar—But it would be endless to enumerate all the various repasts which we met with in this closet, sometimes terrified by the entrance of people, and sometimes comfortably enjoying ourselves without alarm: it is sufficient to inform you, that unmindful of our mother's advice, we continued to live upon the contents of the same cupboard for above a week; when, one evening, as we were as usual hastening to find our suppers, *Softdown*, who happened to be first, ran eagerly to a piece of cheese which he saw hanging before him. Come along, said he, here is some nice cheese, it smells most delightfully good! Just as he spoke these words, before any of us came up to him, a little wooden door on a sudden dropped down, and hid him and the cheese from our sight.

It is impossible to describe our consternation and surprise upon this occasion, which was greatly increased when we advanced near the place, at seeing him (through some little wire bars) confined in a small box, without any visible way for him to get out, and hearing him in the most moving accents beg us to assist him in procuring his liberty. We all

ran round, and round, his place of confinement several times, but not the least crack or opening could we discover, except through the bars, which being of iron it was impossible for us to break or bend. At length we determined to try to gnaw through the wood-work close at the edge, which being already some little distance from one of the bars, we hoped, by making the opening a little wider he would escape: accordingly we all began, he on the inside, and we all on the out, and by our diligence had made some very considerable progress, when we were interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. nurse with the child in her arms.

Upon the sight of her, though much grieved to leave our brother in his distress, yet fearing instant death would be the fate of all of us if we staid, to preserve our own existence, we retired as quick as possible, but not without her seeing some of us, for we heard her say to herself, or the babe in her arms, I declare this closet *swarms* with mice, they spoil every thing one puts here. Then taking up the box in which was poor *Softdown* (and which I afterwards learned was called a *trap*) she carried it into the room: I crept softly after her, to see what would be the fate of my beloved brother. But what words

words can express my horror, when I saw her holding it in one hand close to the candle,



whilst in the other she held the child, singing to her with the utmost composure, and bidding her look at the *mousy! mousy!*

What were the actions or sensations of poor *Softdown* at that dreadful moment I know not, but my own anguish, which it is impossible to describe, was still augmented every moment by seeing her shake the trap almost topsy turvey, then blow through the trap at one end, at which times I saw the dear creature's tail come out between the wires on the contrary side, as he was striving, I suppose,

to retreat from her. At length, after she had thus tortured him for some time, she set the trap on the table, so close to a large fire, that I am sure he must have been much incommoded by the heat, and began to undress her child.

Then hearing somebody go by the door, she called out, Who is there? Is it you *Betty*, if it is, I wish you would come and take down the mouse trap, for I have caught one. *Betty* instantly obeyed her call, and desired to know what she wanted. I want you to take down the mouse trap, she replied, for I cannot leave the child. I am glad that I have got it, I am sure, for the closet swarms so, there is no such thing as bearing it. They devour every thing. I declare they have eaten up a whole pound of sugar, which cost me eleven-pence, sugar is now so monstrously dear! indeed the man made a favour to let me have it for that, only he said as our family were good customers, and I was but a servant, he would take no more. And enough too I thought it was, to have only a penny back in change out of a whole shilling for one pound of sugar; and then to think of the *prison* mice to have it all; but I will break their necks. Do *Betty*, pray take the trap down and return with it as soon as you

can,

can, and I will set it again: for I dare say I shall catch another before I go to bed, for I heard some more rattling among the things. O *lauk!* replied *Betty*, you do not think that *I* will take down the trap, do you? I would not touch it for twenty pounds. I am always frightened, and ready to die at the sight of a mouse. Once when I was a girl, I had one thrown in my face, and ever since I have always been scared out of my wits at them, and if ever I see one running loose, as I did one night in the closet below stairs, where the candles were kept, I *scream* as if I was being killed. Why then answered nurse, I think that you behave like a great fool, for what harm could a mouse do to you? O *la!* I hate them, returned she, and then ran away without the trap. Greatly was I rejoiced at her departure, as I hoped, that by some mean, *Softdown* might still be able to make his escape. But alas! no such good fortune attended him. Some person again passing the door, nurse once more called out: Who is there? *John*, is it you? Yes, replied a man's voice. Then do you step in, will you, for a moment? rejoined Mrs. nurse, and instantly entered a man whom I had never before seen. What do you want, nurse? said he. I only want to get rid of a mouse, returned she

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she; and do you know *Betty* is such a fool that she is afraid of taking it. and I want the trap to set it again, for they swarm here like bees in a hive, one can have no peace for them: they devour and spoil every thing; I say sometimes, that I believe they will eat *me* up at last. While she was saying this, *John* took the trap in his hand, held it up once



more to the candle, then taking a piece of thread out of a paper that lay bound round with a dirty blue ribbon upon the table, he shook the trap about till he got my brother's tail through the wires, when catching hold

of

of it he tied the thread tight round it and dragged him by it to the door of a trap, which he opened and took him out, suspending the weight of his body upon his tail.

Softdown, who till the thread was tied had patiently continued perfectly quiet, could no longer support the pain without dismal cries of anguish: he squeaked as loud as his little throat would let him, exerting at the same time the utmost of his strength, to disengage himself. But in such a position, with his head downward, in vain were all his efforts to procure relief; and the barbarous monster who held him, discovered not the smallest emotions of pity for his sufferings. O! how at that moment did I abhor my own existence, and wish that I could be endowed with size and strength sufficient, at once both to rescue him, and severely punish his tormentors. But my wish was ineffectual, and I had the inexpressible affliction of seeing the inhuman wretch hold him down upon the hearth, whilst, without remorse, he crushed him beneath his foot, and then carelessly kicked him into the ashes, saying, There! the cat will smell it out when she comes up. My very blood runs cold within me at the recollection of seeing *Softdown's* as it spirted from beneath the monster's foot; whilst the

craunch



craunch of his bones almost petrified me with
 horror. At length, however, recollecting the
 impossibility of restoring my beloved brother
 to life, and the danger of my own situation,
 I, with trembling feet, and a palpitating
 heart, crept softly back to my remaining two
 brothers, who impatiently were expecting me
 behind the closet. There I related to them the
 horrid scene which had passed before my eyes,
 whilst the anguish that it caused in their gen-
 tle bosoms far exceeds my power to describe.

After having mingled our lamentations for
 some time, I thus addressed them. We have

this

this night, my brothers, tasted the severest affliction in the cruel death of our dear brother, companion, and friend; let us not, however, only *mourn* his loss, but also gather wisdom from our misfortune, and return to that duty which we have hitherto neglected. Recollect, my dear friends, what were the last words which our good mother spoke to us at parting. She charged us, upon no account, for no temptation whatever to return frequently to the same place; if we did, she forewarned us that death and ruin would certainly await us. But in what manner have we obeyed this her kind advice? We have not even so much as once recollected it since she left us; or, if we thought of it for a moment, we foolishly *despised* it as unnecessary. Now therefore, we severely feel the consequence of our disobedience; and though our sufferings are most distressing, yet we must confess, that we amply deserve them. Let us, therefore, my brothers, instantly fly from a place which has already cost us the life of our beloved *Softdown*, lest we should all likewise fall a sacrifice to our disobedience.—And here the writer cannot forbear observing how just were the reflections of the mouse on the crime which they had been guilty of; and begs every reader will be careful to remember the fatal consequences

consequences that attended their disobedience of their mother's advice, since they may be assured that equal, if not the same misfortune, will always attend those who refuse to pay attention to the advice of their parents.—But to return to the history.—To this proposal, continued the mouse, my brothers readily agreed, and we directly descended between the wainscot to the place we were in, when we discovered the crack that led us to the room in which we feasted on bird seed. Here we determined to wait, and when the family were all quiet in bed, to go forth in search of provision, as we begun to be rather hungry, not having eaten any thing a long while. Accordingly we staid till after the clock struck twelve, when peeping out, we saw that the room was empty: we then ventured forth, and found several seeds, though not enough to afford a very ample meal to three of us.

After we had cleared the room, we again returned to our hiding place, where we continued till after the family had finished their breakfast: they then all went to take a walk in the garden, and we stepped out to pick up the crumbs which had fallen from the table. Whilst we were thus employed at a distance from our place of retreat we were alarmed by

the

the entrance of two boys, who appeared to be about twelve or thirteen years of age. We directly ran towards the crack, but alas! we were not quick enough to escape their observation; for seeing us, they both at once exclaimed, Some mice! some mice! and at the same time took off their hats and threw at us. *Longtail* happily eluded the blow, and safely got home; but poor *Brighteyes* and myself were less fortunate; and though we for a considerable time, by our quickness, prevented their catching us, at length being much disabled by a blow that one of them gave me



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with a book which he threw at me, I was unable any longer to run, and hobbling very slowly across the room he picked me up. At the same moment, *Brighteyes* was so entangled in a handkerchief which the other boy tossed over him, that he likewise was taken prisoner. Our little hearts now beat quick with fear of those tortures we expected to receive: now were our apprehensions lessened, by hearing the boys consult what they should *do* with us. I, said one, will throw mine into the pond and see how it will swim out again. And I said the other, will keep mine and *tame* it. But *where* will you keep it? inquired his companion. O! replied he, I will keep it under a little pan, till I can get a house made for it. He then holding me by the skin at the back of my neck, ran with me into the kitchen to fetch a pan. Here I was not only threatened with death by three or four of the servants. who all blamed Master *Peter* for keeping me, but likewise two or three cats came round him, rubbing themselves backward and forward against his legs, and then standing upon their hind feet, to endeavour to make themselves high enough to reach me. At last taking a pan in his hand, he returned to his brother with one of the cats following him. Immediately upon our entrance the boy

boy exclaimed, O! now I know what I will
 do: I will tie a piece of string to its tail, and
 teach the cat to jump for it. No sooner did
 his thought present itself than it was put into
 practice, and I again was obliged to sustain
 the shocking sight of a brother put to the tor-
 ure. I, in the mean time, was placed upon
 the table with a pan put over me, in which
 there was a small crack, so that I could see
 as well as hear all that passed: and from this
 place it was that I beheld my beloved *Bright-*
eyes suspended at one end of a string by his
 tail: one while swinging backward and for-
 ward, at another pulled up and down, then
 suffered to feel his feet on the ground, and
 again suddenly snatched up as the cat advanc-
 ed, then twisted round and round as fast as
 possible at the full length of the string: in
 short it is impossible to describe all his suffer-
 ings of body, or my anguish of mind. At
 length a most dreadful conclusion was put to
 them, by the entrance of a gentleman booted
 and spurred with a whip in his hand. What
 in the world, *Charles!* said he, as he came
 in, are you about? What have you got there?
 Only a mouse Sir, replied the boy. He is
 teaching the cat to jump, Sir, said *Peter*, that
 is all.

Brighteyes then gave a fresh squeak from the violence of his pain. The gentleman then turning hastily round, exclaimed eagerly, What is it *alive*? Yes, Sir said the boy. And how can you, you *wicked, naughty, cruel* boy, replied the gentleman, take delight in thus tormenting a little creature that never did you any injury? Put it down this *moment*, said he, at the same time giving him a severe stroke with his horse whip across that hand by which he held my brother: Let it go directly, and again repeated the blow, the boy let go the string, and *Brighteyes* fell to the ground.



nd was instantly snapped up by the cat, who growling, ran away with him in her mouth; and I suppose, put a conclusion to his miseries and life together, as I never from that moment have heard any account of him.

As soon as he was thus taken out of the room, the gentleman sat down and taking hold of his son's hand, thus addressed him, *Charles*, I had a much better opinion of you, than to suppose that you were capable of so much cruelty. What right I desire to know, have you to torment any living creature? If it is only because you are larger, and so have it in your power, I beg you will consider, how you would like, that either myself, or some great giant, as much larger than you as you are bigger than the mouse, should hurt and torment you? And I promise you, the smallest creature can feel as acutely as you, nay, the smaller they are, the more susceptible are they of pain, and the sooner they are hurt; a less touch will kill a *fly* than a *man*, consequently a less wound will cause it pain! and the mouse which you have now been swinging by the tail just above the cat's mouth, has not, you may assure yourself, suffered less torment, or fright, than you would have done, had you been suspended by your leg either over water, which would

drown you, or over stones, where if you fell you must certainly be dashed to pieces. And yet you could take *delight* in thus torturing and distressing a poor inoffensive animal. Fie upon it *Charles!* fie upon it! I thought you had been a better boy, and not such a *cruel, naughty, wicked* fellow. *Wicked!* repeated the boy, I do not think that I have been at all *wicked*. But I think you have been extremely so, replied his father; every action that is *cruel*, and gives pain to *any* living creature is wicked: and is a sure sign of a *bad* heart. I never knew a man, who was cruel to *animals* kind and compassionate towards his fellow creatures: he might not perhaps treat them in the same shocking manner, because the laws of the land would severely punish him if he did; but if he is restrained from bad actions by no *higher* motive than only fear of *present punishment*, his goodness cannot be very great. A good man, *Charles*, always takes delight in conferring happiness on all around him; nor would he offer the smallest injury to the meanest insect that was capable of feeling. I am sure, said the boy, I have often seen you kill wasps, and spiders too; and it was but last week that you bought a mouse-trap yourself to catch mice in, although you are so angry now with me. And pray,

pray, resumed his father, did you ever see me torment, as well as kill them? Or did I ever keep them in pain one moment longer than necessary? I am not condemning people for *killing* vermine and animals, provided they do it expeditiously, and put them to death with as little pain as possible; but it is putting them to needless torment and misery that I say is wicked. Had you destroyed the mouse with one blow, or rather given it to somebody else to destroy it, (for I should not think a tender-hearted boy would delight in such operations himself) I would not have condemned you; but to keep it hanging the whole weight of its body upon its tail, to swing it about, and by that, to hold it terrifying over the cat's jaws, and to take *pleasure* in hearing it squeak, and seeing it struggle for liberty, is such *unmanly*, such *detestable* cruelty, as it calls for my utmost indignation, and abhorrence.

But since you think pain so very trifling an evil, try, *Charles*, how you like *that*, said he, giving him at the same time some severe strokes with his horse-whip. The boy then cried, and called out, *I* do not like it at all, *I* do not like it at all. Neither did the *mouse*, replied his father, like at all to be tied to a string, and swung about by his tail; he did
not

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not *like*, and told you so in the language which you perfectly well understood ; but *you* would not attend to his cries ; *you* thought it pleasure to hear it squeak, because you were bigger, and did not *feel* its torture. I now am bigger than *you*, and do not feel *your* pain, I therefore shall not yet leave off ; as I hope it will teach you not to torment any thing another time. Just as he said these words, the



boy endeavouring to avoid the whip, ran against the table on which I was placed, and happily threw down the pan that confined me
I instantly

I instantly seized the opportunity, jumped
 down, and once more escaped to the little
 hole by which I first entered. There I found
 my now *only* brother waiting for me, and was
 again under the dreadful necessity of paining
 his tender heart with a recital of the sufferings
 which I had been witness to in our dear
Brighteyes, as well as the imminent danger I
 myself had been exposed to. And surely,
 said I, we have again drawn this evil upon
 ourselves by our disobedience to our mother's
 advice; she doubtless, intended that we
 should not continue in the same *house* long
 together; whereas, from the day of her leav-
 ing us, we have ever been in any other but
 this, which has occasioned us such heavy afflic-
 tion; therefore, upon no account, let us
 continue another night under this roof;
 but as soon as the evening begins to grow dark
 enough to conceal us from the observation of
 any one, we will set off, and seek a lodging
 in some other place; and should any misfor-
 tune befall us on our passage, we shall at least
 have the consolation of thinking, that we
 were doing our duty, by following the advice
 of our parent. It is true, said my brother, we
 have been greatly to blame, for the future we
 will be more careful of our conduct: but do
 my dear *Nimble*, continued he, endeavour to
 compose

compose yourself, and take a little rest, after the pain and fatigue which you have gone through otherwise you may be sick, and what will become of me, if any mischief should befall you, I shall then have no brother to converse with, no friend to advise me what to do. Here he stopped overpowered with his grief for the loss of our two murdered brothers, and with his tender solicitude for my welfare. I endeavoured all in my power to comfort him, and said, I hoped that I should soon recover the bruises which I had received both from the boy's hat and book, as well as the pinches in my neck with his finger and thumb, by which he held me, and promised to compose myself. This *promise* I fulfilled by endeavouring to sleep, but the scene that I had so lately been witness to, was too fresh in my imagination to suffer me to close my eyes: however, I kept for sometime quiet.

The rest of the day we spent in almost total silence, having no spirits for conversation, our hearts being almost broken with anguish. When it grew toward evening we agreed to find our way out of that detested house, and seek for some other habitation, which might be more propitious. But we found more difficulty in this undertaking than we were at all aware of: for though we could with tolerable ease go from room to room *within* the house

all, when we attempted to quit it, we found every way surrounded with so thick a brick wall, that it was impossible for us to make our way through it, we therefore run round and round it several times, searching for some little crevice through which we might escape ; but all to no purpose, not the least crack could we discover, and we might have continued there till this time, had we not at length, after the family were all in bed, resolved to venture through one of the apartments into the hall, and so creep out under the house door. But the dangers we exposed ourselves to in this expedition, were many and great ; we knew that traps were set for us about the house, and where they might chance to be placed we could not tell. I had likewise been eye witness to no less than four cats who might, for ought we knew to the contrary, at that hour of darkness be prowling in search of some of our unhappy species.

But in spite of every difficulty and hazard, we determined to venture rather than continue in opposition to our mother's commands, and to reward our obedience, we escaped with trembling hearts, unobserved, at least unmolested by any one. And now, for the first time since our birth, we found ourselves exposed to the inclemency of the weather. The night

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night was very dark and tempestuous, the rain poured down in torrents, and the wind blew so exceedingly high, that low upon the ground as we were, it was with difficulty that we could keep our legs: added to which, every step we took, we were in water up to our stomachs. In this wretched condition we knew not which way to turn ourselves, or where to seek for shelter. The spattering of the rain, the howling of the wind, together with the rattling and shaking of the trees, all contributed to make such a noise, as rendered it impossible for us to hear whether any danger was approaching us or not.



In this truly melancholy situation we waded on for a considerable time, till at length we reached a small house, and very easily gained admittance through a pretty large hole on one side of the door. Most heartily did we rejoice at finding ourselves once more under shelter from the cold and rain, and for some time only busied ourselves in drying our hair, which was as thoroughly wet, as if we had been served as the boy threatened my brother *Brighteyes*, and we had really been drawn through a pond. After we had done this and had a little rested ourselves, we began to look about in search of food, but we could find nothing, except a few crumbs of bread and cheese in a man's coat pocket, and a piece of tallow candle stuck on the top of a tinder-box. This however, though not such delicate eating as we had been used to, yet served to satisfy our present hunger, and we had just finished the candle, when we were greatly alarmed by the sight of a human hand (for we mice can see a little in the dark) feeling about the very chair on which we stood. We jumped down in an instant, and hid ourselves in a little hole behind a black trunk, that stood in one corner of the room.

We then heard very distinctly a man say *Betty*, did you not put the candle by the bed-

side? Yes, that I am very sure I did, replied a female voice. I *thought* so answered the man, but I am sure it is not here now. *Tom! Tom! Tom!* continued he. What, father, replied a boy starting up, what is the matter? Why do you know any thing of the candle? I cannot find it, my dear, and I want it sadly, for I fancy it is time we should up, and be jogging. Dost know any thing of it, my lad? Not I truly, father, said the boy, I only know that I saw mother stick it in the box-lid last night, and put it upon the chair, which she set by the bed-side, after you had put your cloaths upon the back of it; I know I saw her put it there, so it must be there now I fancy. Well! I cannot find it replied the father, so we must e'en get up in the dark, for I am sure it must be time. The father and son then both dressed themselves, and the man taking a shilling out of his pocket, laid it upon the chair, saying at the same time, There *Betty*, I have left a shilling for you, take care it does not go after the candle, for where that is I *cannot* tell any more than the carp at the bottom of the squire's fish pond. He then unlocked the door, and went away accompanied by his son.

After their departure we again came out, and took another walk round the room, and found

found our way into a little cupboard which we had not before observed. Here we discovered half a loaf of bread, a piece of cold pudding a lump of salt butter, some soft sugar in a bason, and a fine large slice of bacon. On these dainties we feasted very amply, and agreed that we should again hide ourselves behind the black trunk all day, and at night, when the family were in bed, return to take another meal on the plenty of nice provision which we so happily discovered.

Accordingly we crept back, just as the woman went to fill her tea-kettle at a pump, which stood between her house and the next neighbour's. When she returned, she put it upon the fire she had just lit, and taking a pair of bellows in her hand, sat down to blow it. While she was so employed, a young gentleman about ten years of age, very genteelly dressed, entered the room, and in a familiar manner asked her how she did? I am very well, thank you, my dear, replied she, and pray, master *George* how does your mamma and papa do? and all your brothers and sisters? They are all very well thank, you, returned the boy; and I am come to bring you a slice of cake, which my grandpapa gave me yesterday. Then throwing his arms round her neck, he went on saying, O! my dear,
 dear

dear *Betty Flsod*, how I do love you! I would do any thing in the world to serve you. I



shall save all my *Christmas*-boxes to give to you, and when I am a man, I will give you a great deal of money. I wish you were a lady, and not so poor. I am much obliged to you my dear, said she, for your kind good wishes, but indeed *love*, I am very well contented with my station; I have a good husband, and three good children, and that is more than many a lady can say: and *riches*, master George, unless people are good, and those

those one lives with are *kind* and *obliging*, will never make any body happy. What comfort now do you think a body could ever have at Squire *Stately's*? I declare if it was put to my choice, I would rather a thousand times be as I am. To be sure they are very rich, but what of that? they cannot eat gold, neither can gold ease their hearts when they are bursting almost with pride and ill-nature.

They say, indeed, that Madam *Stately* would be kind enough, if they would let her rest; but what with the Squire's drinking and swearing, and the young gentlemen's extravagance, and her daughter's pride, and quarrelling, she is almost tired out of her life. And so Master *George*, I say, I had rather be poor *Betty Flood*, with honest *Abraham* for my husband, than the finest lady in the land, if I must live at such a rate. To be sure, nobody can deny, but that money is very desirable, and people that are rich can do many agreeable things which we poor ones cannot; but yet, for all that, *money* does not make people happy. Happiness, Master *George*, depends greatly upon people's own tempers and dispositions: a person who is fretful and cross will never be happy though he should be made king of all *England*. And a person who is *contented*, and good-

humoured, will never be wretched, though he should be as poor as a beggar. So never fret yourself, *Love*, because *Betty Flood* is poor; for though I am poor, I am *honest*; and whilst my husband and I are happy enough to be blessed with health, and the use of our limbs, we can work for our living; and though we have no great plenty, still we have sufficient to support us; so pray dear, eat your cake yourself, for I would not take it from you for ever so much. They then disputed for some time who should have it, at last *George* scuffled away from her, and put it into the closet, and then nodding his head at her, ran away, saying, he must go to school that moment.

Betty Flood then ate her breakfast, and we heard her say *something* about the *nasty mice* but; *what* we could not make out, as she muttered softly to herself. She then came to the trunk behind which we lay, and taking out of it a roll of new linen, sat down to needle-work. At twelve o'clock her husband and son returned, so moving her table out of the way, she made room for them at the fire, and fetching the frying-pan dressed some rashers of the nice bacon we had before tasted in the cupboard. The boy in the mean time spread a cloth on the table, and placed the bread and cold

ugh cold pudding on it likewise. Then returning
ne- to the closet for their plates, he called out,
lood *Lauk!* father, here is a nice *bunch* of plumb-
est cake, can you tell how it came? Not I, in-
copy deed *Tom*, replied his father, I can tell no
the more than the carp at the bottom of the
ng; Squire's fish-pond. O! I will tell you, said



Mrs. *Flood*, I know how it came. Do you know that dear child, Master *George Kendall*, brought it for me; he called as he went to school this morning. I told him I would not have it, but the dear little soul popped it into the cupboard, and ran away without it. *Bless*
his

his little heart ! I do think he is the sweetest child that ever was born : you will laugh at me for saying so, but I am sure I should have thought the same, if I had *not* nursed him myself. Indeed, replied her husband, I do not laugh at you for saying so, for I think so too, and so must every one who knows him ; for when young gentlemen behave as he does, every body must love and admire them ; there is nothing I would not do to help and serve that child, or any of his family, they always are so kind, and speak as civilly to us poor folk, as if we were the first lords or ladies in the land. I am sure, if it were needful, I would go through fire and water for their sakes : and so would every man in the parish, I dare say. But I wonder who would do as much to help Squire *Stately* or any of his family, if it was not, that I should think it my *duty*, (and an honest man ought always to do *that*, whether he likes it or not) but I say, if it was not, that it would be my *duty* to help my fellow creature, I would scarcely be at the trouble of stepping over the threshold to serve them, they are such a set of cross good-for-nothing gentry. I declare it was but as we came home to dinner now, that we saw Master *Sam* throwing sticks and stones at Dame *Frugal's* ducks, for the sake of seeing them waddle :

addle; and then, when they got to the pond, he sent his dog in after them, to bark and frighten them out of their wits.



And as I came by, nothing would serve him but throwing a great dab of mud all over the sleeve of my coat. So I said, Why Master Sam, you need not have done that, I did nothing to offend you, and however amusing you may think it to insult poor people, I assure you, it is very wicked, and what no good person in the world would be guilty of. He then set up a great rude laugh, and I walked on and said no more.

But

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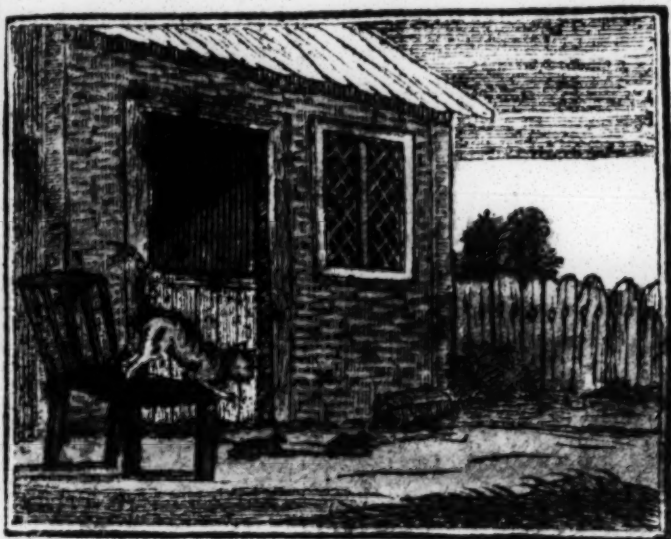
But if all gentlefolk were to behave like that family, Squire *Allrule's*, I had rather be poor as I am, than have all their riches; that would make me act like them. Very true *Abraham*, replied his wife, that is what *I* say. and what *I* told Master *George* this morning; for to be poor, if people do not become so through their own extravagance is no disgrace to any body, but to be haughty, cruel, cross, and mischievous, is a disgrace to all who are so, let their rank be as exalted as it may. Here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a man, who begged Mr. *Flood* to assist him in unloading his cart of flour, as his man was gone out, and he could not do it by himself. Well, I will come and help you with all my heart, said *Flood*, and so shall *Tom* too: will you my lad? I cannot live without help myself, and if I do not assist others, I am sure I shall not deserve any when I want it. So saying he left his house, and his wife, after cleaning, and putting in their proper places those things which had been used at dinner, again sat down to her sewing. Soon after the clock had struck six, the man and his son returned, and sitting round the fire, they passed the evening in social conversation, till they went to bed, which was a little after eight; and they

they convinced me by their talk and behaviour, that happiness in this world, depends far more upon the *temper* and disposition of the *heart*, than upon any external possessions : and that *virtue*, and a desire to be *useful* to others, afford far greater satisfaction and peace of mind, than any riches and grandeur can possibly supply without such necessary qualifications. After they were all fallen asleep we crept out, and leaving the candle unmolested, which was again placed on the tinder-box by the bed-side, we hastened into the closet, where we regaled heartily, and devoured that part of the plum-cake, which *Tom* had very generously left for his sister *Polly*, who we found was expected home the next day.

We then retired to our safe retreat, and thought we might venture to stay for one more night's provisions without running any danger from our too frequent return to the same place. But in the morning we found our scheme frustrated, for on the woman's going to the closet to get her breakfast, she observed the robbery which we had committed, and exclaimed, Some teasing mice have found their way into the closet, I will borrow neighbour *Saverwell's* trap to night, and catch some of the little toads, that I will ! After hearing this, it would have been madness to

make any further attempts; we therefore agreed to watch for an opportunity, and escaped on the very first that offered. Accordingly about noon, when Mrs. Flood was busily employed in making some pancakes, we slipped by her unobserved, and crept out at the same hole by which we first entered. But no sooner were we in the open road, than we repented our haste, and wished that we had continued where we were, till the darkness of the night might better have concealed us from the observation of any one. We crept as close to the wall of the house (as far as it reached, which was but a few paces) as we possibly could, and then stepped into a little ditch which we were soon obliged to leave again, as the water ran in some parts of it almost up to the edge.

At length we reached a little cottage, which we were just entering, when a cat, that was sleeping unnoticed by us upon a chair, jumped down, and would certainly have destroyed me (who happened to go first) had she not at the same moment tried to catch my brother, and by that mean missed her aim, and so given us both an opportunity to escape, which we did by scrambling behind a brick that a child had been playing with by the side of the door. Fortunately the brick lay too close to the house for the cat to get her paw behind it, so



as to be able to reach us, though to avoid it we were obliged to use the greatest precaution, as she could thrust it in a little way, so that if we had gone one inch too near either end, she would certainly have dragged us out by her talons. In this dreadful situation did we spend some hours, incessantly moving from one end of the brick to the other, for the moment she had, by the entrance of her paw, at one end, driven us to the other, she stepped over, and again made us retreat. Think with what dreadful terror our little hearts must have been oppressed, to see our mortal enemy so

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closely watching us, expecting every moment when she shook the brick with her two fore-paws in searching, and with her mouth endeavoured to lift it up, that she would be so far able to effect her purpose, as to make it impossible for us to escape her jaws. But happily for us, it had some how or other got so wedged that she could not move it to any distance, though it kept momentarily increasing our terrors, by shaking as she strove to turn it.

From this state of horror, however, we were at length delivered by a little boy of



about

about two years old, who came out of the house, and taking the cat up round its body with both hands, tottered away with it, and shut the door. Finding ourselves thus unexpectedly once more at liberty, we determined to make use of it, by seeking some safer retreat, at least, till night should better hide us from public view. Terrified almost out of our senses, we crept from behind the brick, and after running a few yards, slipped under the folding doors of a barn, and soon concealed ourselves amidst a vast quantity of threshed corn. This appeared to us the most desirable retreat that we had yet found: not only as it afforded such immense plenty of food, but also as we could so easily hide ourselves from the observation of any one; beside, as it did not appear to be a dwelling house, we could in security reside, free from any danger of traps, or the cruelty of man. We therefore congratulated each other, not more on account of the wonderful escape which we had, than upon our good fortune in coming to a spot so blessed with peace and plenty.

After we were a little recovered from the fatigue of mind, as well as of body, which we had lately gone through, we regaled very heartily upon the corn that surrounded us, and

then fell into a charming sleep, from which we *wife*
 were awakened the next morning by the sound *dant*
 of human voices. We very distinctly heard *and*
 that of a boy saying, Let us mix all the *cut*
 thrashed corn with the rest which is not *and*
 thrashed, and that will make a *fine fust*, and *and*
 set *John* and *Simon* a *swearing* like *troopers* *dirty*
 when they come and find all their labour lost,
 and that they must do all their work over
 again. And do you think that there is any
 thing so *agrecable* in giving people trouble,
 and hearing them swear, replied another
 voice, that you can wish to do it? For my
 part, I think it so wicked a thing, that I
 hate to hear any body guilty of it, much less
 would I be the cause of making them commit
 so great a sin: and as for giving them all their
 trouble over again, so far would it be from
 affording me any *pleasure*, that on the con-
 trary it would give me great *pain*; for how-
 ever you may think of it *Will*, I assure you,
 it always gives me much uneasiness to see peo-
 ple labouring and working hard. I always
 think, how much I should dislike to be obliged
 to do so myself, and therefore very sincerely
 pity those who must. On no account there-
 fore will I do any thing to add to their labour
 or that shall give them unnecessary work.
 Pough! answered *Will*, you are wonderfully
wife!

h wife! I for my part, hate such superabun-
 dant wisdom: I like to see folk *fret and stew,*
 and *scold*, as our maids did last week when I
 cut the line, and let all the *sheets*, and *gowns*,
 and *petticoats*, and *frocks*, and *shirts*, and *aprons*,
 and *caps*, and what not, fall plump into the
 dirt. O! how I did laugh! and how they



did mutter and scold! And do you know,
 that just as the wash *ladies* were wiping their
 coddled hands, and comforted themselves with
 the thought of their work being all over, and
 were going to *sip* their tea by the fire side, I

put them all to the *scent*; and they were obliged to wash every rag over again. I shall never forget how cross they looked, nay verily believe *Susan* cried about it; and *how* did laugh!

And pray, rejoined the other boy, should you have laughed equally hearty if, after you had been at school all day, and had with much difficulty just got through all your writing, and different exercises, and were going to play, should you *laugh*, I say, if somebody was to run away with them all, and your master oblige you to do them all over again? Tell me *Will*, should you *laugh*, or *cry* and look *cross*? And even that would not be half so bad for you, as it was for the maids to be obliged to wash their clothes over again: washing is very hard labour, and tires people sadly, and so does thrashing too; it is very unkind therefore, to give them such unnecessary trouble; and every thing that is *unkind*, is *twicked*; and I would not do it upon any account I assure you. Then I *assure* you, replied *Will*, you may let it alone: I can do it without your assistance. He then began mixing the grain and the chaff together, the other boy strongly remonstrated against it, to which he paid no attention; and whilst he was so employed, two men, *Simon* and *John*, entered the barn.

Why,

Why, how now Master *Billy*, said *Simon*, what are you about? What business have you to be here? You are always doing some mischief or other! I wish with all my heart that you were kept chained like a dog, and never suffered to be at liberty, for you do more harm in an hour, than a body can set right again in a month! *Will* then took up hats full of the corn and chaff, and threw it in the two men's faces; afterwards taking up a flail, he gave *Simon* a blow across his back, saying at the same time, I will shew you the way to thrash, and separate the flesh from the bones,



O! will

O! will you go, young squire, said John, and will shew you the way to make naughty boys good. He then left the barn, but presently returned accompanied by a gentleman, upon the sight of whom *Will* let fall the flail which he was still then brandishing over *Simon*'s head, and was going away, when the gentleman taking hold of his hand, said, You shall do not stir from *this* place, Master *William*, nor have one mouthful of breakfast, till you have asked the men pardon for your behaviour, and likewise sifted every grain of corn from the chaff which you have mixed with it. When you have done that, you may have some food, but not before; and afterward you may spend the rest of the day in thrashing, then you will be a better judge, my boy, of the fatigue and labour of it, and find how you should like, after working hard all day to have it rendered useless by a mischievous boy.

Remember, *William*, what I have now said to you, for I do insist upon being minded; and I assure you, that if you offer to play, or do any thing else to-day, you shall be punished very severely. The gentleman then went away. *Will* muttered something, I could not exactly hear what, began to sift the corn, and so much had he mixed together, that he did not go in for his breakfast till after I had heard

bn, heard the church clock strike one, though it
 boy as before eight when he came into the
 enil. In about an hour he returned and the
 upon her boy with him, who addressed him say-
 hich. Ah! *Will*, you had better have taken
 mon'ey advice, and not have done so: I thought
 gen' what you would get by your *nice fust* as you
 You called it. I never knew any good come of
liam mischief; it generally brings those who do it
 you into disgrace; or if they *should* happen to
 cha- scape unpunished, still it is always attended



with some inconveniece; it is an *ill-natured*
 disposition

disposition which can take pleasure in giving a trouble to any one. Do *hold* your tongue, *James*, replied *Wil*, I declare I have not patience to hear you preach, you are so properly *wise*, and *prudent*, and *sober*! you had better go in doors and *sew* with your mamma, for you talk just as if you were a *girl*, and not in the least like a boy of spirit. You are like a *girl*! resumed *James*, are *girls* the only folk who have any sense, and good-nature? Or what proof does it shew of spirit to be fond of mischief, and giving people trouble? It is like a *monkey* of spirit indeed? but I cannot say, that I see either *spirit* or *sense* in making the clean clothes fall into the dirt, or mixing the corn and chaff, for the sake of making the poor servants do them all over again: if these things are a sign of any spirit, I am sure it is of an *evil* one, and not at all such as I wish to possess, though I no more want to sit still, or *work* with a needle, than you do; but I hope there are other ways of shewing my *spirit*, as you call it, than by doing *mischief*, and being *ill natured*. I do not think my papa ever seems to be effeminate, or want sufficient *spirit*; but he would scorn to give unnecessary trouble to any body: and so will *Tom Vault*, though no boy in the world loves play better than he does; he plays

gives at cricket the best of any boy in the
 pool, and I am sure none can beat him at
 this; and as for skipping, I never saw a boy
 do so well in all my life; and I am sure he
 would beat you with all your *spirit*, out and
 in, twenty times, either at running, or
 creeling, or swimming, or climbing a tree.
 And yet he never gives trouble to any body
 for the sake of *fun*; he is one of the best
 behaved boys in the world; and whether it
 be like a *girl* or not, he always does what he
 thinks to be right and kind; and if that is
 it like girls, why! with all my heart; I
 spare girls well enough, and if they behave
 well, I do not see why you should speak so
 contemptuously of them. My papa always
 thinks that he loves girls just as well as boys,
 and of none but foolish and naughty boys despise
 and teaze them. Just as he said these words,
 when *John* and *John* entered the barn, and seeing
 them all stand idle, Come, come, young gentleman,
 then *John*, take up your flail and go to work.
 To work! to work! night will be here
 presently, and you have done nothing yet, Pre-
 sently after the gentleman returned, and en-
 dured *John's* advice for him to mind his work.
 After Master *Will* had continued his em-
 ployment some little time, he began to cry,
 being, his arms ached ready to drop off, and
 lays his

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his hand was so sore he could not bear it. Then doubtless, replied his father, you would prodigiously like, after you have been labouring all day, to have your work to do over again, for the sake of diverting a foolish boy. But go on *William*, I am determined that you shall for one day, know what it is to work hard, and thereby be taught to pity, and



help, not add to the fatigue of those who do. The boy then went on with his business though not without making great complaints and shedding many tears. At length, however, evening came, and the gentleman, his

and the two men all went away, leaving *Long-tail* and myself to enjoy our abundance. We passed another night in the sweetest undisturbed repose, and in the day had nothing to alarm our fears. In short our situation was every way so perfectly happy and desirable, that we thought, although our mother had charged us not to *return* frequently to the same place, yet she could not mean that we should not take up our abode in a spot so secure and comfortable. We therefore determined to continue where we were, till we should find some cause for removing. And happy had it been for us if we had kept to this resolution, and remained contented when we had every thing requisite to make us so. Instead of which, after we had thus, free from care, passed our time about seven months, like fools as we were, we began to grow weary of our retirement, and of eating nothing but the same food; and agreed that we would again venture forth and seek for some other lodging, at the same time resolving, in case we could find no habitation that suited us, to return to the barn where we had enjoyed so many days of plenty and repose.

Accordingly one fine moon-light *Monday* night after securing our supper on the corn, we set forth, and traveled for some distance

without any further molestation than our own natural fears created. At length we came to a brick-house, with about five or six windows in front, and made our way into it through a small laticed window which gave access into the pantry; but on our arrival here we had no opportunity of so much as observing what it contained, for on our slipping down a cat instantly flew at us, and by the greatest good luck in the world, there chanced to be a hole in one of the boards of the floor close to the spot where we stood, into which we both were happy enough to pop, before she could catch us. Here we had time to reflect, and severely blame ourselves for not being satisfied with our state in the barn. When, said I, addressing myself to my brother, When shall we grow wise, and learn to know *that certain evil always attends every deviation from what is right*, When we disobey the advice of our mother, and, tempted by cakes and other dainties, frequently returned to the same dangerous place, how severely did we suffer for it? And now by our own *discontent*, and not being satisfied when so safely, though more humbly lodged, into what trouble have we not plunged ourselves? How securely have we lived in the barn for the last seven months, and how happily might we still have continued there

here, had it not been for our restless dispositions? Ah! my brother, we have acted foolishly. We ought to have been contented when we were at peace, and should have considered that if we had not every thing we could wish for, we had every thing that was *necessary*; and the life of a mouse was never designed for *perfect* happiness. Such enjoyment was never intended for our lot: it is the portion only of beings whose capacities are far superior to ours. We ought then to have been *contented*; and had we been so, we should have been as happy as our state of life would have admitted of. What you say is certainly very true, replied *Longtail*, and I sincerely wish that we had thought of these things before. But what must we now do? we *said* we would return to the barn in case of difficulties, but that is now impossible, as if we attempt to retreat, the cat that drove us in here, will certainly destroy us: and yet in proceeding, what difficulties must we encounter, what dangers may we not run? O! my beloved *Nimble*, continued he, what a life of hazard is ours! to what innumerable accidents are we hourly exposed! and how is every meal that we eat at the risk of our very existence.

It undoubtedly is, replied I, but with all these troubles we still are very desirous of pre-

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serving it: let us not then, my brother, indulge our hearts in murmuring, and finding fault with that life, which notwithstanding all its evils, we value so highly. Rather let us endeavour to learn experience, and by conducting ourselves better, escape many of those troubles which we now suffer. So saying, I advised him to follow me, for, added I, it is impossible for us to exist in the spot in which we are at present: we must therefore strive to work our way into some other house, or apartment, where we can at least find some food. To this *Longtail* agreed. The rest of the night, and all the next day, we spent in nibbling, and finding our way into a closet in the house, which richly repaid us for all our toil, as it contained *sugar plumbs*, *rice*, *millet*, various kinds of *sweetmeats*, and what we liked better than all the rest, a paper of nice *macaroons*. On these we feasted most deliciously till our hunger was fully satisfied, and then creeping into a little hole, just big enough to contain us both, behind one of the jars of sweetmeats, reposed ourselves with a nap, after our various and great fatigues which we had gone through. I never was a remarkable sound sleeper, the least noise disturbs me, and I was awakened in the morning by the servant maid's coming into the room to sweep it, and

get it ready for the reception of her mistress and family, who soon after entered. As I wanted to know from whom the voices which I heard proceeded, I stepped softly from behind the jar, and just peeped under the door, into the room, where I discovered a gentleman, two ladies, and a little boy and girl.



As I was totally unacquainted with all places of retreat, and did not know how soon any of them might have occasion to open the closet door, I instantly returned to my brother; and awaking him, told him it was

time for us to be upon our guard, as the family were all up and about. Whilst we were thus situated, the first words I heard distinctly were those of the gentleman, saying, No, *Frank*, I can never have a good opinion of him; the boy who could *once* deceive, may, for ought I know, do so *again*; he has, by breaking his word, forfeited the only dependence one could possibly have in him.

A person who has once lost his *honor*, has no mean left of gaining credit to his assertions. By *honor Frank*, I would be understood to speak of *veracity*, of *virtue*, of *scorning* to commit a *mean* action, and not that brutish sense in which some understand it; as if it consisted in a readiness to *fight* and *resent* an injury; for so far am I from considering such behaviour as any proof of honor, that on the contrary, I look upon it as a sure sign of want of *proper spirit*, and *true honor*. *Fools*, *bullies*, and even *cowards* will *fight*, whereas none but men of *sense* and *resolution*, and *true magnanimity* know how to *pardon*, and *despise* an insult. But indeed, Sir, replied the boy, at school if one did not fight they would laugh at one so, there would be no such thing as bearing it. And for that very reason it is my dear, that I say to pass by, and pardon an insult, requires more *resolution* and *courage* than mere *fighting* does. When

When I wish you to avoid quarrelling and fighting, I by no means want you to become a coward; for I as much abhor a *daftardly spirit*, as any boy in your school can possibly do; but I would wish you to convince them that you merited not that appellation, by shewing through the whole of your behaviour, a resolution that despised accidental pain, and avoided revenging an affront, for no other reason than because you were convinced that it shewed a much *nobler spirit to pardon than to resent*. And you may be assured, my dear, few are the days that pass without affording us some opportunity of exerting our patience, and shewing, that although we disdain quarrelling, still we are far from being cowards. I remember when I was at school, there was one boy, who, from his first coming, declined upon all occasions, engaging in any battle; he even gave up many of his just rights to avoid quarrelling: which conduct instead of gaining, as it justly deserved, the approbation of his companions, drew upon him the insult and abuse of the whole school; and they were perpetually teasing him with the approbrious title of *coward*. For some time he bore it with great good humour, and endeavoured to laugh it off, but finding that had no effect, he one day thus addressed us: If you suppose that I like
to

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to be called a *coward*, you are all very much mistaken; or if you think me one, I assure you that you are not less so: for no boy in the school, should, if, put to the trial, shew



greater resolution than myself; indeed I think it no small proof of patience that I have borne your repeated insults so long; when I could by behaving more like a savage beast, and less like a reasonable creature, have established my character at once: but I *abhor* quarrelling, my soul detests to treat my fellow creatures as if they were brutes, from whose fangs I must defend myself, but if nothing else but *fighting* will

will convince you, that I possess not less courage than yourselves, I will now offer in cold blood, to engage with the biggest boy in the school. If I conquer him, it will be a sign that I *know* how to defend myself; and if he conquers me, I will, by my behaviour, give a proof that I am not wanting in resolution to suffer pain, although I never will so far demean the character of a *reasonable creature*, and a *Christian*, as to *fight* upon every trifling disagreement or insult. No sooner had he uttered these words, than every boy present was loud either in his commendation or condemnation. One quarter of them, convinced of the justness of his arguments, highly extolled his forbearance; whilst the other three parts, with still greater noise, only called him a *bully* and a *mean spirited coward*, who dared not fight, and for that reason made such a fine speech, hoping to intimidate them. Well then said he, if such is your opinion, why will none of you accept my offer, you surely cannot be *afraid*, you who are such brave fellows, of such *true courage*, and such *noble spirits*, cannot surely be afraid of a *coward*, and a *bully*! Why therefore does not one of you step forward. and put my *fine speech* to the test? Otherwise, after I have thus challenged you all, I hope *none* for the future will think that they

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they have any right to call me *toward*; though I again declare my fixed resolution against fighting. Just as he said this, a voice called for *help*, was heard from a lane adjoining to the play yard. Immediately we all flocked to the side nearest whence it proceeded, and clambering upon benches, watering-pots, or whatever first came in our way, peeped over the wall, where we discovered two well grown lads about seventeen or eighteen stripping a little boy of his cloaths, and



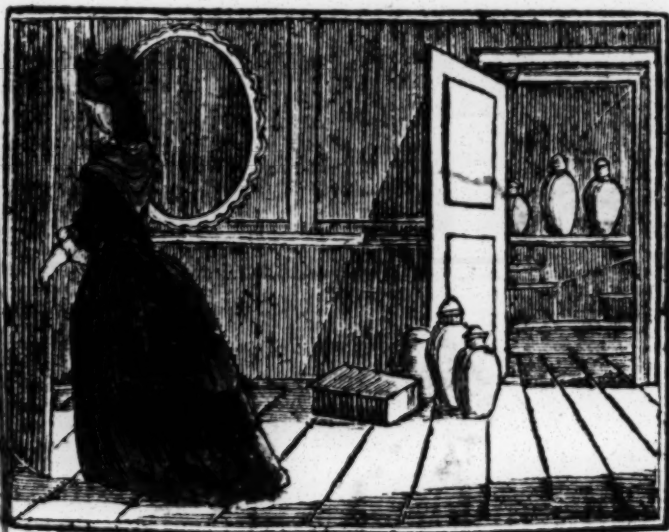
beating him for his out-cries in a most cruel manner: and at a little distance farther down the lane, sat a company of Gipsies, to whom the

the two lads evidently belonged. At the sight of this we were all much distressed, and wished to relieve the boy, though discovering so large a party, we were too much afraid to venture ; till *Tomkins*, the boy I before spoke of, instantly jumped from the wall, and on saying, Has nobody courage to follow me ? ran toward them as fast as possible, and with uncommon strength and agility placed himself between them and the boy, and began defending himself in the best manner that he could ; which he did for some time, with great dexterity, none of his *fighting* school-fellows having courage to go to his assistance. At length, however seeing it impossible for him to stand out any longer against two so much stronger than himself, the boys agreed to secure themselves by numbers, and to sally forth to his assistance all together. This scheme succeeded, and very shortly rescued *Tomkins* from his antagonists. He thanked them for their assistance, saying at the same time, I hope you will no longer doubt my *courage*, or my abilities to fight when it is necessary, or in a good cause. After so signal a proof of his valour, his greatest enemies could no longer doubt it, and without ever engaging in foolish battles, he passed through school as much respected as any boy, and his magnanimity was never again called in question. As

As the gentleman stopt speaking, the little girl called out, O! papa, the coach is at the door? Is it? my dear returned the father. Well then, stop, my love, said one of the ladies; I have got a few cakes for you, stay and take them before you go. She then unlocked the closet where we were, and took down the paper of macaroons, among which we had so comfortably regaled ourselves; when observing the hole in the paper through which we entered, O dear! she exclaimed, the mice have actually got into my cupboard: I will move all the things out this very morning, and lock the cat up in it, for I shall be undone if the mice once get footing here, they will soon spoil all my stores, and that will never do. She then kissed both the children, and giving them the cakes, they, the gentleman, and the other lady all departed: and she instantly began to move the boxes and jars from the closet: whilst we, terrified almost out of wits, sat trembling behind one of them, daring to stir, yet dreading the cat's approach every moment.

We were soon however, obliged to move our quarters, for the lady taking down the very jar which concealed us, we were forced (without knowing where we were) to jump

down instantly. In vain we sought all round the room for some avenue whereat we might escape ; the apartment was two well fitted up to admit the smallest crack, and we must then certainly have been destroyed had we not, with uncommon presence of mind, ran up the back of the lady's gown, by which means she



lost sight of us, and gave us an opportunity to make our escape, as she opened the door to order the cat to be brought in. we seized the lucky moment, and dropping from her gown, fled with the utmost haste out at the house

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door, which happened to be wide open, and
I, without once looking behind me, ran on
till I discovered a little crack in the brick wall
which I entered, and which after many turn
ings and windings, brought me to this house
where I have now continued sculking about in
its different apartments for above a month
during which time I have not heard the least
tidings of my beloved brother, *Longtail*.
Whether therefore any mischief befel him
as he followed me, or whether he entered the
crack with me, and then lost sight of me,
know not : but in vain have I sought him
every day since my arrival within these walls
and so anxious am I to learn what is become
of him, that I am now come forth, contrary
to my nature, to engage your compassion, and
to beseech you in case—

At this moment the door of my room opened, and my servant coming hastily in, the mouse jumped from my table, and precipitately retreated to the same hole from whence I first addressed me ; and though I have several times peeped into it, and even laid little bits of cake to entice it back again, yet have never been able to see it any where since. Should either that, or any other, ever again favour me so far with their confidence, as to intru

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and me with their history, I will certainly
communicate it with all possible speed to my
valleaders, who I hope have been wise
enough to attend to the advice given them in
the preceding pages, although it was deli-
vered to them by one as insignificant as a
mouse.

END OF VOL. I.

Printed and Sold by John Marshall, No, 4,
St. Mary Church-Yard, in Watling-Street.

